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ABSTRACT

Three problems have plagued the traditional methods of evaluation of student teachers: the imposition of a supervisor's philosophy on the student, semantic vagueness in a supervisor's checklist of a student's performance, and determining each student's level of achievement. Wheeling College revised its field-based secondary teacher preparation program to overcome these problems. The competencies of a master teacher were identified and became the goals of the students in the program. Each goal emphasized the student's developing his style of teaching and shaping his curriculum consistent with his philosophy and theory of learning, thus avoiding differing educational philosophies. Semantic vagueness was dealt with by identifying a progression of more demanding behaviors that culminate in each particular goal behavior. The final problem of determining each student's level of achievement was accomplished by providing tools to document student teacher performance (audio and video tapes, clinical supervision feedback) with the responsibility for utilizing these tools resting with the student teacher. (JA)

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STUDENT TEACHER EVALUATION MUST RESIDE IN THE NEUTRAL WORLD OF DOCUMENTED BEHAVIOR

Carson Bryan and Jon Quinlisk

In most professions, the internship is the program which attempts to answer the following question: How well does the person apply his knowledge and skills? In teacher preparation we consider student teaching as the most critical area of a student's professional education sequence. Regardless of the differences that teacher preparation programs have in education courses, they all have success in student teaching as the keystone to recommendation for entering the profession.

Today we are witnessing a national trend toward Performance-Based Teacher Education. In fact, Performance-Based Certification is being explored for possible implementation by many states. Colleges and Universities, whether moving to PBTE or just desiring to improve the student teaching experience, must face the problem of evaluating teacher performance.

Evaluation of a student teacher has traditionally been done two ways. One method of evaluation is where the supervisor observes the student teacher and makes evaluative comments. Often this method does not allow for basic differences in educational philosophy and may result in the supervisor imposing his values and philosophy of education on the student teacher. The other traditional method is the supervisory checklist. Usually the checklist is loaded

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with semantic vagueness and we may find what one evaluator considers as "rapport" another sees as "chaos", or one man's "attention to individual needs" is another's "lack of planning". Since these two methods contain major weaknesses, we are faced with the need for a meaningful and useful method of evaluation.

At Wheeling College we wanted to revise our field-based secondary teacher preparation program to make it more effective. Almost immediately we had to find answers to the problem of evaluation. As a first step in our quest for a solution to the problem, we identified the competencies a Master Teacher would exhibit regardless of his educational philosophy and values. The competencies, our operational definition of a "good" teacher, became the goals for students in our program. The goals we identified are:

I The student will identify the basic factors behind the operation of the school system and develop mechanisms for functioning within the structure.

II The student will structure classroom situations to provide for productive learning.

III The student will control classroom situations to provide for productive learning.

IV The student develops his style of relating to pupils and shapes the curriculum consistent with his philosophy and theory of learning.

V The student develops and applies skills of self-evaluation.

VI The student develops and applies change agent skills.

VII The student uses the process of scholarly inquiry in solving educational problems.

We used the goals for approximately one semester with student teachers. Our evaluation of our students indicated that the goals eliminated the problems of conflict in philosophy and value by transcending the areas of disagreement inherent in differing educational philosophies. Our operational definition of a "good" teacher was compatible with the differing philosophies with which we came in contact.

The problem of semantic vagueness became our next task because we recognized that our goals were general enough for a variety of interpretations. To solve this problem we identified a progression of more demanding behaviors that culminate in the goal behavior. By specifying the goal behavior in more precise terms, the problem of semantic vagueness became negligible. Perhaps analysis of what we did with our goals (using Goal I as an example) can clarify this point.

Goal I (The student will identify the basic factors behind the operation of the school system and develop mechanisms for functioning within the structure.) has the following three objectives and procedures that increase in degree of difficulty:

Objective A. The student identifies persons and their functions in the explicit power structure.

Procedure A. Each student procures and reads handbooks, communications to faculty, and school board information.

Objective B. The student identifies persons and their functions in the implicit power structure.

Procedure B. Each student attends faculty meetings, eats lunch with faculty, visits faculty lounges, attends board meetings, interacts with a variety of faculty members and fellow student teachers.

Objective C. The student applies his intellectual schemes for functioning within the structure.

Procedure C. Each student operates unhindered by external pressures throughout the semester.

Successful completion of these objectives demonstrates that Goal I has been met.

The final problem to be solved was how to determine each student's level of achievement. To slip into the enticement of evaluator judgments would negate our attempts to eliminate the weaknesses found in the two traditional methods. The solution we found was developing and employing a variety of ways to document the student's highest level of behavior. Thus the Department provides the student with the tools for documenting his behavior. The tools include a learning environment to operate in, educational experiences, equipment, and instruments for determining progress. The responsiblity for using these tools

in documenting performance levels resides with the student teacher. The student teacher uses audio and video tapes, written records such as lesson plans and experience notebooks, instruments for measuring pupil feedback, Clinical Supervision feedback, written tests, and conferences with supervisors to document his level of achievement. With the evidence from these sources provided by the student and using the performance levels as a criteria, evaluation of the student teacher's performance is freed from semantic vagueness and possible conflicts of value between the evaluator and the teacher.

Again using Goal I as an example, we have the following evaluations of the three objectives.

Evaluation of A. The student receives 100% on a written test after the 3rd week. (The student continues taking the test until he achieves 100%)

Evaluation of B. The student receives 100% on a written test concerning the process he would follow in solving situational problems. The test is given during the 7th or 8th week. (The student continues taking the test until he achieves 100%)

Evaluation of C. Independent and documented assessment by student, classroom supervisor, and college supervisor.

Thus we solved our problem of how to accurately evaluate a student teacher by placing evaluation in the neutral world of documented behavior.